



March 3, 2000

Ms. Ann Simmons
President
Galveston I.S.D.
P.O. Box 660
Galveston, Texas 77553

OR2000-0867

Dear Ms. Simmons:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 133335.

The Galveston Independent School District (the "ISD") received a request for "a copy of the preliminary financial audit made by the Texas Education Agency of the Galveston Independent School District." You seek to withhold the requested information under section 552.116 of the Government Code.

Section 552.116(a) excepts from required disclosure "[a]n audit working paper of the state auditor or the auditor of a state agency or institution of higher education as defined by section 61.003, Education Code." However, "[i]f information in an audit working paper is also maintained in another record, that other record is not [excepted from required disclosure] by this section." Subsection (b) of the section defines "audit" and "audit working paper" for purposes of the section.

In our opinion, most of the submitted document consists of information which is also maintained in another record. See also, e.g., Gov't Code § 552.022(a)(3) ("information in an account, voucher, or contract relating to the receipt or expenditure of public or other funds by a governmental body" may not be withheld from public disclosure unless confidential by law). We have marked the pages of the submitted document you may withhold under section 552.116. We believe that the rest of the submitted information must be released.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular records at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other records or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For example, governmental bodies are prohibited from asking the attorney general to reconsider this ruling. Gov't Code § 552.301(f). If the governmental body wants to challenge this ruling, the governmental body must appeal by filing suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such an appeal, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3), (c). If the governmental body does not appeal this ruling and the governmental body does not comply with it, then both the requestor and the attorney general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, within 10 calendar days of this ruling, the governmental body will do one of the following three things: 1) release the public records; 2) notify the requestor of the exact day, time, and place that copies of the records will be provided or that the records can be inspected; or 3) notify the requestor of the governmental body's intent to challenge this letter ruling in court. If the governmental body fails to do one of these three things within 10 calendar days of this ruling, then the requestor should report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at 877/673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can appeal that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Department of Public Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.—Austin 1992, no writ).

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. Although there is no statutory deadline for contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within 10 calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,



William Walker
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

WMW/ljp

Ref: ID# 133335

Encl. Submitted documents

cc: Mr. Scott E. Williams
The Galveston County Daily News
8522 Teichman Road
Galveston, Texas 77554
(w/o enclosures)